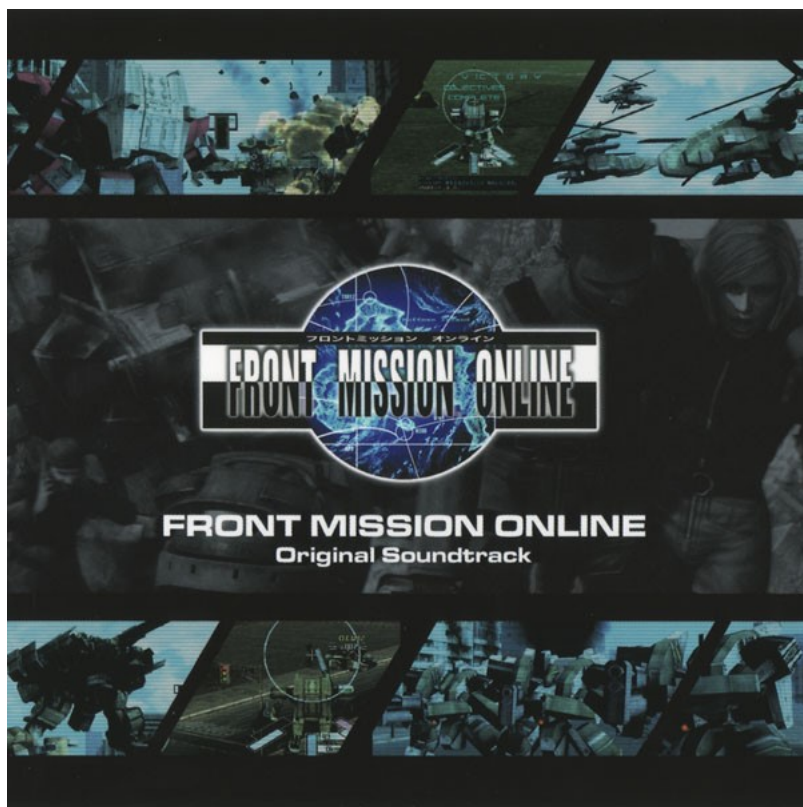


# . Main/The Merchandise Of Front Mission

## Introduction

There's much more to the Front Mission series than its video game line-up developed by Toshiro Tsuchida and his team alone. Throughout the series' 18-year history, fans have been treated to a plentiful and diverse range of merchandise. Sadly, much like the video games, many of these products have not been released outside of Japan. For people outside of Japan, importing has been the only option to get such merchandise. And unfortunately, the vast majority of these items are rare commodities as of this writing. With that said the different kinds of Front Mission merchandise will be covered in the following.

## Original Soundtracks (OST)



The OST for Front Mission: Online.

A common and regular staple of any video game merchandise, Front Mission has its share of original soundtracks (OST). With the exception of the 2089 mini-series, each Front Mission entry has received an OST featuring all of the music tracks played in the game. The 2089 mini-series does not have its own OST as it borrows music from the other installments. Front Mission 2089: Border of Madness, for example, has tracks from Online, First, 2, 3, and 4. The upcoming Front Mission Evolved does not have an OST in the works, but it will be part of a special OST collection. Square Enix representatives have revealed plans for a [15th Anniversary Box](#) with a compilation of Front Mission OSTs. Of the OST line-up, there are a few products worth noting.

When the original Front Mission was remade for the Sony PlayStation 1 as "Front Mission First" in 2003, a promotional album was released featuring some rearranged pieces and a new track composed by then-newcomer Hidenori Iwasaki. The rearrangements and new tracks were included in Front Mission 4's OST, titled "Front Mission 4 Plus 1st". Speaking of promotional albums, there is one in particular that really stands out: a vinyl record for Front Mission Alternative. It was a special promotional item that was mostly given to Japanese disc jockeys (DJ) and featured some of the game's music. The Front Mission Alternative vinyl is also noteworthy for being arguably the rarest music merchandise in the series; even in Japan, it's extremely hard to find.

The OSTs are fairly easy to find, but some like Front Mission 2's are rare collectibles. Online retailers and import shops are more likely to have these items on sale.

### Action Figures & Model Kits



The Lenghe 1 action figure from the Front Mission 3 ARTFX line.

Mechs make for popular action figures and model kits. Front Mission is no exception to this rule and has a nice stable of these articulate toys. Since the release of Front Mission 2 in 1997, [Kotobukiya](#) has handled the series' action figures and model kits. With the aforementioned game, three resin kits depicting wanzers like the *Frost M40* were released. When Front Mission 3 was released, Kotobukiya's ARTFX division created a series of six-inch action figures showcasing the game's wanzers like the *Zenith Rev*. These action figures were also released in North America through [Palisades Toys](#), days before the North American release. Kotobukiya continued to collaborate with Square in producing Front Mission merchandise and created the Front Mission Trading Arts series in 2005.

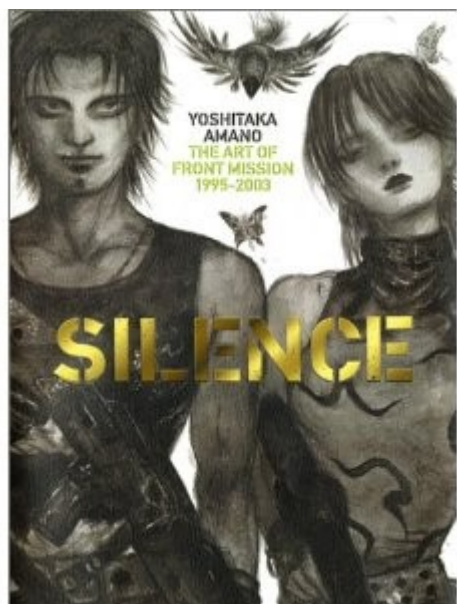
This line of three-inch action figures differed from the ARTFX series in terms of detail. From the joints to the minute details of their armor, the Trading Arts figures are meticulously-crafted and thus more valuable to a collector. Trading Arts Plus Stage I featured wanzers mostly from the original Front Mission, such as the *Giza* and the *Gust*. Trading Arts Plus Stage II, which was released one year later, featured a more balanced line-up of wanzers from the series. These

included the Front Mission 2's *Schakal*, 3's *Grapple*, and 5: Scars of the War's *Crustacia*.

Variations of Stage I and II figures were also released, featuring the wanzers in matte or metallic colors. There was also a special Trading Arts figure, *Glen's Kyojun*, which was a pre-order bonus for Front Mission 5: Scars of the War.

At least three Front Mission Evolved action figures have been confirmed. As part of Square Enix's Play Arts Kai line, a Zenith, Enyo, and the new Zepyhr model were released when the game came out. For artists who are looking to create their own wanzers, a number of papercraft models can be downloaded from the Japanese Front Mission game websites. For anyone looking to purchase an action figure or model kit, don't count on finding Zenith models easily. Even in Japan, they are considered very rare and valuable collectibles. For the other models, these can be found through online retailers or through Kotobukiya's online shop.

## Books



The art book, *Silence - The Art of Front Mission 1995-2003*.

Much like the OST, books of some kind are a common commodity for video game franchises. Front Mission boasts a nice diversity of books, both game and non-game related. Each entry has its own set of books, the most common being strategy guides and art books. Some of the notable game-related items are the "In Huffman" art book for the original Front Mission, and Front Mission 3's Perfect Works reference book. For books that aren't necessarily game-related, there is one everyone should check out: *Front Mission World Historica - Report of Conflicts 1970-2121*.

Released in 2007, this 560+ page behemoth is a reference book that covers every Front Mission entry, with only the non-canon Gun Hazard missing. While it doesn't quite cover the games fully (story analysis is noticeably lacking), it's an excellent reference book for any fan of the series. *Silence - The Art of Front Mission 1995-2003* is another noteworthy product that showcases Yoshitaka Amano's artwork from the original Front Mission and Front Mission: Gun Hazard. Front Mission is also into music books; aspiring musicians can practice their favorite pieces from the games thanks to [DOREMI Music Publishing](#).



Most of the Front Mission books are uncommon to rare finds so be prepared to do some searching. Online retailers and eBay are the best places to start searching for these.

## Manga & Novels



Part of Front Mission's vast and successful manga & novel line - 18 years and still going!

Quite possibly the most interesting line of merchandise, Front Mission has spawned manga and novels. While video game-to-manga adaptations have been done before, most of these are simply retelling the story, or feature non-canon stories not related to the games. In Front Mission's case, this is not true. While the manga and novels do take place within their respective game's story, the story focus is on the characters and not the world around them. As the video games are world-driven in their focus, the character-driven manga and novels add a lot of new content to the stories. Combined with the stronger plot linkages, they are significant entries to the series from the storytelling standpoint that bridge the gaps between the video games. Reading these expanded universe supplements is vital to fully understanding the series' stories and their cast, from



backstory to their motives.



A scene from the novel series, Front Mission 4 ~Elsa~.

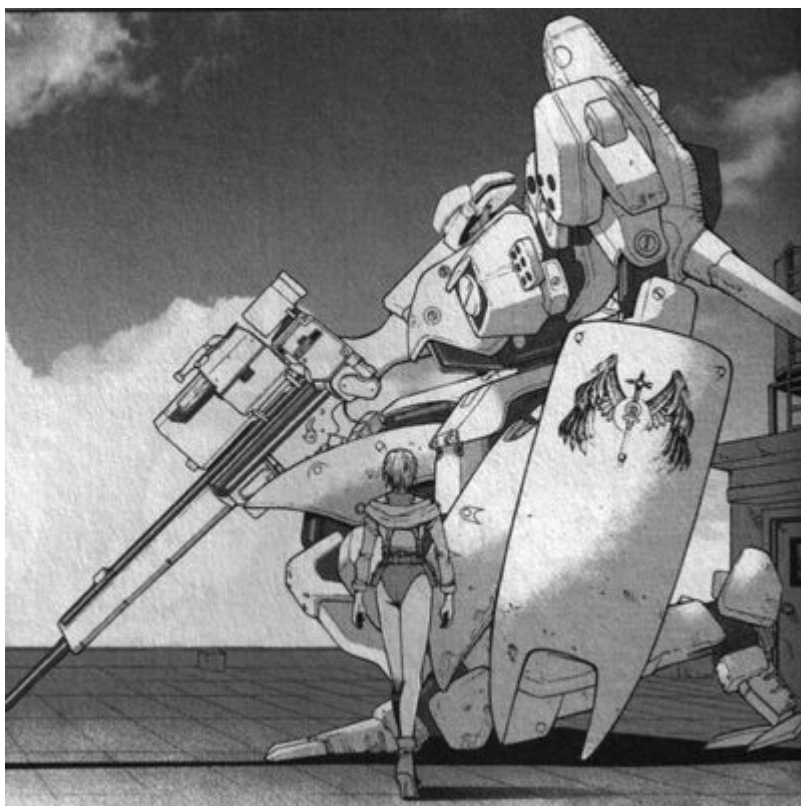
The Front Mission manga and novel line is split into two parts. A good chunk of these are directly related to the video games themselves. The other half focuses on completely new stories, such as *Dog Life & Dog Style*, which are not part of the video game line. Most of the game-related manga and graphic novels were handled by ASCII Comix (now known as [Comic Bean](#)), whereas [Young Gangan](#) has handled the original, new stories. Other publishers involved with these products include Aspect Novels (*Gun Hazard: A Mercenary's Iron Legs*) and Game Novels (*Front Mission 4 ~Elsa~*). In a joint collaboration with ASCII Comix, FamiComics was involved in the creation of *Front Mission Zero*, the very first manga and novel series created in 1994. Zero also stands out as being the first true Front Mission; it takes place in the 2070s and in effect, sets up the series storyline.





A scene from the original manga series, Front Mission Dog Life & Dog Style.

Like the video games, the manga and novels has had different artists, such as Yusuke Naora and Taishu Matsuda. The change in artists isn't so bad though; most of the artwork is very consistent with respect to the game-related entries. Storytelling, however, was handled by the Front Mission writers such as Hideo Iwasaki and Yasuo Ohtagaki. This isn't a surprise as the video games themselves were handled by the same people. In terms of story content, the manga and novels holding nothing back. The violence levels are very high, from pools of blood to organs being ruptured by shrapnel. Likewise, the content is very mature; topics such as war rape, torture, child soldiers, post-traumatic stress disorder, insanity, and alcoholism are portrayed in great detail. Aimed at the mature, adult-aged audience, the stories are very raw, depressing, and disturbing. Despite this, they are extremely moving, surprisingly very philosophical, and represent quality storytelling at its best.



A scene from the manga series, Front Mission ~The Drive~.

For those wanting to fully immerse themselves into the Front Mission universe, good luck finding any of these series. Many of them are out of print and are considered very rare collectibles. eBay and Japanese auctions are the only way to nab these valuable goodies...but Front Mission Zero is a



whole new story.

## Other Merchandising



A mouse pad promotional item for Front Mission 2.

Believe it or not, there's more kinds of products that are not part of any established merchandising lines. (books, OSTs, etc.) Most of these are simply there to enhance the overall Front Mission experience, so think of them as icing on the cake. To start, the original Front Mission has a pin badge set featuring the Canyon Crows and Hell's Wall emblems. Front Mission 2 had mouse pads with some characters on it. Phone cards were the rage with Front Mission Alternative and Gun Hazard. The Millennium Collection edition of Front Mission 3 came with a key chain, penlight, wallet, and three metallic wanzer figures. Front Mission: Online offered a more involved experience through a special joystick controller. Many posters and demo discs have seen the light of day as well. There are even Front Mission live-action films and radio dramas, all of which are also expanded universe supplements to the games!

Unfortunately, like most of the series merchandise, good luck hunting them down since they're all rare items.

## Conclusion

Front Mission has a rich history of merchandise that simply goes beyond what's expected from a video game franchise. Fans can find something to enjoy, from the OSTs to the manga and novels. The availability of these products is the only real problem; very few of the Front Mission merchandise can be readily found. Nonetheless, they are worth the time and effort to locate and purchase. Should Front Mission continue to grow and further outlive its original goals, let's hope that Square Enix makes its merchandise easier to acquire.